

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

JAVIER GUZMAN 12521 Biscayne Drive Philadelphia, PA 19154,

Plaintiff,

VS.

HOVG, LLC dba BAY AREA CREDIT SERVICES, LLC 2215-B Renaissance Drive Las Vegas, NV 89119,

PENDRICK CAPITAL PARTNERS II, LLC 1714 Hollinwood Dr, Alexandria, VA 22307

Defendant.

18 3013

CIVIL ACTION NO.

FILED
JUL 18 2018

KATE BARKUAN, Olook By______Dep. Clerk

COMPLAINT

I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

- 1. This is an action for damages brought by a consumer pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 ("FDCPA").
- 2. The FDCPA requires a mandatory initial notice to the consumer, to serve as an informal dispute mechanism. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a).
- 3. The notice alerts the consumer of his rights to, *inter alia*, dispute his debt in writing within thirty days after receipt of the notice. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(3).
- 4. Only a written dispute is sufficient to trigger the debt collector's obligation to cease collection and verify the debt. See 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(b). Oral disputes, such as a dispute via telephone, are insufficient to trigger any obligation of the debt collector. See Caprio v. Healthcare Revenue Recovery Grp., LLC, 709 F.3d 142, 148 (3d Cir. 2013).
- The validation notice must not be overshadowed or contradicted by other messages
 from the debt collector.

6. Defendant is subject to liability for sending an initial collection letter to Plaintiff which obscured the required notice, and suggested that telephoning could preserve the validation rights.

II. <u>JURISDICTION</u>

7. Subject matter jurisdiction of this Court arises under 15 U.S.C § 1692k and 28 U.S.C. §1331.

III. PARTIES

- 8. Plaintiff, Javier Guzman ("Guzman" or "Plaintiff"), is a consumer who resides in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the address captioned.
- 9. Defendant, HOVG, LLC dba Bay Area Credit Service LLC ("HOVG" or "Defendant") is a Nevada collection agency with an office for the regular transaction of business located in Irving, Texas.
- 10. HOVG regularly engages in the collection of consumer debts by use of the mail and telephone.
 - 11. HOVG regularly attempts to collect consumer debts alleged to be due another.
- 12. HOVG is a "debt collector" as that term is contemplated in the FDCPA, 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).
- 13. Pendrick Capital Partners II, LLC ("Pendrick") is a foreign limited liability company with a place of business at the address captioned above.
 - 14. Pendrick is a buyer of debts for medical care.
 - 15. As part of its business, Pendrick collects on the debts that it buys.
- 16. Pendrick uses the United States mail in the business the principal purpose of which is the collection of debt owed or asserted to be owed or due another.

- 17. Pendrick is a "debt collector" as that term is contemplated in the FDCPA, 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).
 - 18. Pendrick hired HOVG to collect a debt alleged due from Plaintiff.
- 19. At all times relevant, HOVG was acting as Pendrick's agent for the purposes of collecting a debt alleged due from Plaintiff.

IV. STATEMENT OF CLAIM

- 20. On August 9, 2017, HOVG sent Plaintiff an initial written communication in connection with a debt alleged due to Pendrick. (Exhibit "A", redacted in part per Fed.R.Civ. P. 5.2).
- 21. HOVG was required to include in this communication a Notice which states, *interalia*, that if Plaintiff disputes the debt or any part thereof, he must notify HOVG of his dispute in writing. This is significant because only a *written* dispute triggers HOVG's obligation to provide Plaintiff verification of the debt.
- 22. Here, HOVG's collection letter states, "If you are not able to pay the balance, or if you have any questions, please call us at 800-684-1856." (Exhibit A).
- 23. On the reverse side, the collection letter states, "Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of the debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid." (Exhibit A). This sentence does not specify that the dispute must be in writing.
- 24. The above sentence, when construed with the sentence inviting the consumer to call "[i]f you are not able to pay the balance, or if you have any questions," creates a "reasonable probability that the least sophisticated debtor . . . would be induced to overlook his statutory right to dispute the debt." See Graziano v. Harrison, 950 F.2d 107, 111 (3d Cir. 1991).

25. A consumer reading this language could reasonably believe that a phone call would be sufficient to preclude the HOVG from assuming the debt to be valid.

COUNT I - FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT

- 26. Plaintiff repeats the allegations contained above as if the same were here set forth at length.
- 27. The August 9, 2018 collection letter from Defendant HOVG violates the FDCPA by failing to effectively provide Plaintiff with the statutory Notice required by 15 U.S.C. § 1692g, and by overshadowing the required notice.
 - 28. Pendrick is vicariously liable for the conduct of its debt collector, HOVG.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, Javier Guzman, demands judgment against Defendant HOVG and Pendrick for:

- (a) Damages;
- (b) Attorney's fees and costs;
- (c) Such other and further relief as the Court shall deem just and proper.

V. DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

7/18/2018

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury as to all issues so triable.

Date:

Respectfully submitted:

CARY L. FLITTER

ANDREW M. MILZ

JODY THOMAS LOPEZ-JACOBS

Attorneys for Plaintiff

FLITTER MILZ, P.C.

450 N. Narberth Avenue, Suite 101 Narberth, PA 19072

(610) 822-0782

Exhibit A

P.O. BOX 5914 TROY MI 48007-5914 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



PLEASE DO NOT SEND PAYMENTS OR 1 CORRESPONDENCE TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS

> լոյելիվենըական իրականականին այներին անկանին իրանական և այդում է և P79QAI00303896 -524426791 I15582 JAVIER GUZMAN 12521 BISCAYNE DR

PHILADELPHIA PA 19154-3014

FaRAY AREA CREDIT

P.O. BOX 467600. **ATLANTA GA 31146** 800-684-1856

Phone Hours: Mon. - Fri.: 8AM - 12AM ET Saturday: 8AM - 7PM ET Office Hours: Mon. - Frl.: 8AM - 5PM ET

BACS Account #:

Creditor: Creditor Account #:

2737 Pendrick Capital Partners II, LLC

467

Original Creditor:

Original Creditor Account #: Principal Assigned:

TOTAL DUE:

AHN EMERGENCY GROUP OF IN

6385

AUGUST 9, 2017

ACCOUNT NOTIFICATION

Our client, Pendrick Capital Partners II, LLC, has purchased your account from AHN EMERGENCY GROUP OF IN with date of service 02-20-2016 and has assigned it to this collection agency.

You may remit your payment by mail to:

BAY AREA CREDIT SERVICE P.O. BOX 467600 **ATLANTA GA 31146**

Please ensure the BACS Account # and Creditor name are included on your check or money order.

Additionally, you can make payment in full by using your checking account, debit card or credit card by visiting our website at www.bayareacredit.com/pay or over the phone by calling 800-684-1856.

If you are not able to pay the balance, or if you have questions, please call us at 800-684-1856.

Sincerely,

HOVG, LLC dba Bay Area Credit Service (BACS), 4145 Shackleford Road, Suite 330B, Norcross, GA 30093

THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT BY A DEBT COLLECTOR AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION.

in order to credit your account properly, you must return this bottom portion with your payment.

If you wish to make a payment on the web go to: www.bayareacredit.com/pay. You may mail your payment for processing to BAY AREA CREDIT SERVICE, P.O. BOX 467600. ATLANTA GA 31146. If you have any questions or would like to pay by phone, call 800-684-1856.

NAME: JAVIER GUZMAN BACS Account # 2737 Creditor: Pendrick Capital Partners II, LLC
Creditor Account #: 467

TOTAL DUE: \$

BAY AREA CREDIT SERVICE P.O. BOX 467600 ATLANTA GA 31146

PLEASE SEND ALL PAYMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE TO THE ADDRESS BELOW:

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Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of the debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days from receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of the judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification. If you request this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor if different from the current

A menos que usted le notifique a esta oficina dentro de 30 días después de que recibió este aviso que usted reclama la validez de la deuda o cualquier parte de la misma, esta oficina dará por hecho que la deuda es válida. Si usted le notifica a esta oficina por escrito en 30 días de recibir este aviso que usted reclama la validez de la presente deuda o cualquier parte de la misma, la oficina obtendrá verificación de la deuda u obtendrá una copia del dictamen y le remitirá una copia de dicho dictamen o verificación. Si usted le solicita a esta oficina por escrito dentro de 30 días de recibir este aviso, esta oficina le proveerá el nombre y domicilio del acreedor original si es diferente al acreedor actual.

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WORK PHONE NO.	HOME PHONE NO.
NAME	
ADDRESS	process and the second
CITY STA	TEZIP



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Our client, Pendrick Capital Partners II, LLC ("Pendrick CP II"), has asked us to provide you with the information contained below.

This notice is being provided to you in compliance with the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act.

This notice has no reflection or bearing upon the status of your account. For example, if your account has been settled, the balance has been paid, the balance has been disputed, or if you have filed for bankruptcy protection, the status of your account shall not change as a result of this notice.

The privacy and security of your personal information is important to Pendrick CP II. Pendrick CP II does not share information about you with anyone, except as permitted by law. This notice will inform you about Pendrick CP II policies and procedures concerning the personal information about that Pendrick CP II obtains, maintains and discloses in connection with the accounts(s) of your that Pendrick CP II owns. Pendrick CP II collects nonpublic information about you that is obtained from one or more of the following sources.

- 1. Information Pendrick CP II received from companies that sold Pendrick CP II your account(s);
- 2. Information about your transactions with Pendrick CP II's affiliates; and
- 3. Information from skip tracing companies and/or consumer reporting agencies.

INFORMATION PENDRICK CP II MAY SHARE WITH PENDRICK CP II AFFILIATES—Pendrick CP II may share identification (such as name and address) information about Pendrick CP II transactions and experiences with you (such as payment history) and information that does not identify you, with Pendrick CP II affiliates. By sharing this information, Pendrick CP II is better able to service your account(s).

INFORMATION PENDRICK CP II MAY SHARE WITH NONAFFILIATED COMPANIES- Pendrick CP II shares

necessary information Pendrick CP II collects about you as described above, with non-affiliated companies, involved in the servicing of your account(s), as permitted by the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, or government agencies in response to an investigative demand, subpoena or court order, as required by applicable law.

Because Pendrick CP II respects your privacy, Pendrick CP II does not sell, trade or otherwise disclose your identity or any other personal information about you to third parties for their marketing. Pendrick CP II does not share collected information about customers or former customers with third parties for any other purpose other than as described above, except as permitted by applicable privacy law.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY OF YOUR ACCOUNT(S)- Pendrick CP II restricts access to nonpublic personal information about you to only those employees who need to know such information, and third party service providers who provide support services to Pendrick CP II. Pendrick CP II maintains physical, electronic and procedural safeguards to protect your personal information. If Pendrick CP II uses other companies to provide services for Pendrick CP II, Pendrick CP II requires them to keep the information Pendrick CP II shares with them safe and secure and Pendrick CP II does not allow them to use or share information for any purpose other than the job they are hired to do.

SPECIAL NOTICE REGARDING COLLECTED INFORMATION SUBJECT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION

PRACTICES ACT. This Privacy Notice is being sent to you by Pendrick CP II in accordance with federal privacy law, and it describes our privacy practices generally. However, please be assured that collected information that is received or used for purposes of collecting a debt subject to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act is communicated only in accordance with that Act.

FURTHER INFORMATION: for additional information concerning Pendrick CP II privacy policy, you may write to Pendrick CP II at: Pendrick Capital Partners II, LLC Attn: Customer Service, 79 Warren Street, Suite 3, Glens Falls, NY 12801.



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VIL COVER SHEET 2:18-3513 VIL COVER SHEET JS 44 (Rev 06/17)

The IS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (She INSTRICTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

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I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				HOVE, LLC dba	SAY AREA	CR DO SER	VICES LIC		
Javier Guzman				PENDRICK CAPI			VIOLO, LLO		
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(c) Attorneys Firm Name, A Cary L. Flitter, Esq., And Flitter Milz, P.C., 450 N. I 266-7863	rew Milz, Esq , J o dy Le	ópez-Jacobs, Esq	310)	Attomeys (If Known)					
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Case 2:18-cv-03013-WB Document 1 Filed 07/18/18 Page 10 of 11 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

	Biscayne Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19154			
Address of Defendant: 2215 B Renaissance Drive,	, Las Vegas, NV 89119; 1714 Hollinwood Drive, Alexandria, VA			
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction.	Transaction. Philadelphia, PA 19154			
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:				
Case Number Judge	Date Terminated			
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered to any of the	ne following questions:			
Is this case related to property included in an earlier number previously terminated action in this court?	red suit pending or within one year Yes No			
Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of pending or within one year previously terminated action in the same issue of fact or grow out of pending or within one year previously terminated action in the same issue of fact or grow out of pending or within one year previously terminated action in the same issue of fact or grow out of pending or within one year.				
Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a pate numbered case pending or within one year previously termi				
4 Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social sec case filed by the same individual?	curity appeal, or pro se civil rights Yes No			
this court except as noted above DATE 14 201 DATE	not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in 3 / 2 / 5 7 Morhey-at-Law/Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I D. # (if applicable)			
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category only)				
A. Federal Question Cases:	B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:			
I. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other C 2 FELA 3 Jones Act-Personal Injury 4 Antitrust 5 Patent 6 Labor-Management Relations 7 Civil Rights 8 Habeas Corpus 9 Securities Act(s) Cases 10 Social Security Review Cases 11 All other Federal Question Cases (Please specify) Fair Debt Collection Practices	2. Airplane Personal Injury 3. Assault, Defamation 4 Marine Personal Injury 5 Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 6 Other Personal Injury (Please specify) 7. Products Liability 8 Products Liability - Asbestos 9 All other Diversity Cases (Please specify)			
	ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION			
. ,	fication is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration)			
I,, counsel of record or pro se plaintiff, do hereby certify				
Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53 2, §3(c) (2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000 00 exclusive of interest and costs.				
Relief other than monetary damages is sought.				
DATE				
DATE				
NOTE. A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38				



JAVIER GUZMAN

APPENDIX I

CIVIL ACTION **18 3013**

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

	RICK CAPITAL PARTNERS II, LLC : NO.			
plaint filing side of design the pl	cordance with the Civil Justice Expense and Delay Reduction Plan of this court, coufff shall complete a case Management Track Designation Form in all civil cases at the complaint and serve a copy on all defendants. (See § 1:03 of the plan set forth on the of this form.) In the event that a defendant does not agree with the plaintiff regardation, that defendant shall, with its first appearance, submit to the clerk of court and laintiff and all other parties, a case management track designation form specifying that defendant believes the case should be assigned.	he tir the re rding d ser	me of everse said ve on	
SELE	ECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CASE MANAGEMENT TRACKS:			
(a)	Habeas Corpus – Cases brought under 28 U.S.C. §2241 through §2255.	()	
(b)	Social Security – Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits			
(c)	Arbitration Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.	$\left\{ x\right\}$	$\left(\right)$	
(d)	Asbestos – Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.	()	
(e)	Special Management – Cases that do not fall into tracks (a) through (d) that are commonly referred to as complex and that need special or intense management by the court. (See reverse side of this form for a detailed explanation of special management cases)	()	
(f)	Standard Management - Cases that do not fall into any one of the other tracks.	()	
Date	6/2018 Attorney a Naw Jody T. López-Jacobs Attorney for Plaintiff			
610-8 Telep		<u>m</u>		